

# Intersectional Contestations. The Meanings of Integration of Migrant Pupils in Austrian Schools

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# What to expect?

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# 1. Introduction

## Public debates on migration and integration in Austria since 2015:

- „Migrants“ are causing problems
- Integration reduced to „cultural“ assimilation
- Education became highly contested battlefield for integration policies

## 2. Aim and research question

- Give teachers and school principals a voice
- Show that integration in schools is a double-sided process between „migrant“ pupils, „local“ pupils, teachers, parents
- Acknowledge the complex situation of „migrant“ pupils

**→ How do school representatives negotiate intersecting structures of inequality in which ‘migrant’ pupils are positioned at Austrian schools?**



## 3. Theoretical foundation

### Inclusionary and exclusionary forms of intersectionality:

- “*Inclusionary intersectionality*” is sensitive and aware of intersecting power structures (Dill/Zambrana 2009)
- “*Exclusionary intersectionality*” (Mokre/Siim 2013) runs the risk of reproducing domination and discrimination and thus excluding specific groups from society



## 4. Methods

- 15 schools in Vienna and Eisenstadt
- 52 in-depth interviews with teachers and school principals
- 13 focus groups with teachers and school principals

→ Schools were selected according to diversity („two-track“ education system)



## 5. Result I: Exclusionary intersectionality

- Focus on nationality or migration status only, neglect of socio-economic disadvantages and power structures
- Ethnicization of integration and learning outcomes
- Diversity as a „problem“
- Securitization of migration

→ *Assimilationist understanding of integration*



## 6. Result II: Inclusionary intersectionality

- Attention to intersectional discrimination experiences of „migrant“ pupils
- Socio-demographics are reflected in pupils' composition of the school
- Focus on intersectional discrimination in several areas of society (e.g. labor market)

→ *Integration as double-sided process*



## 7. Result III: Ambivalences

- Conscious and explicit disarticulation of intersectional experiences of discrimination of pupils:
  - „We treat them primarily as children and pupils“
- *Aims at promoting equality among pupils by ignoring intersecting experiences of discrimination*
- *(Unintentional) reproduction of social inequalities by depoliticizing them*



## 8. Conclusions

*On the one hand ...*

- Exacerbation of individualization and privatization of integration
- Strengthening assimilative integration approach

*On the other hand ...*

- Recognizing the integration process by taking interplay of social structures into account (school type, neighborhoods ...)
- Understanding of structural causes for im/mobility of „migrant“ pupils



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Thank you for your attention!